

# EXHIBIT A

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**BY SOCIETE GENERALE DE BANQUE AU LIBAN S.A.L.**

In response to the news shared on 20 February 2023 by certain Lebanese media reporting that the General Prosecutor at the Court of Appeal of Baabda (Mount Lebanon), Judge Ghada Aoun, pressed charges against Société Générale de Banque au Liban SAL ("SGBL") and its Chairman General Manager, Mr. Antoun Sehnaoui, for money laundering, SGBL hereby clarifies the following:

- 1- SGBL firmly condemns and rejects the baseless accusations levelled against the bank and its Chairman General Manager in both (i) this umptieth groundless complaint filed by the so-called nebulous group "*The people want to reform the system*" against several Lebanese banks, and (ii) the aforesaid judicial decision.

SGBL further reiterates that it carries out its business in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, both local and international, notably in terms of Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT).

- 2- The above decision – if confirmed – is legally groundless and factually incorrect and, in any case, null and void as it was issued by Judge Ghada Aoun whose political affiliation is well established. It is therefore strictly driven by political considerations and manipulation orchestrated by a well-identified political party whose objectives are widely known.

By way of background, Judge Aoun's blatant misconduct and irregular behavior resulted, a few months ago, in her removal from a similar case raised against Lebanese banks by, respectively, the General Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation and the Highest Council of the Judiciary.

Furthermore, judge Aoun has been brought before the Judicial Disciplinary Commission following several complaints filed against her before the Judicial Inspection Authority as she flagrantly lacks impartiality throughout the proceedings filed before her and violates very basic legal, procedural and deontological rules, which is obviously the case here.

- 3- The legal procedure referred to above follows the exact same pattern as the one used in the other legal actions filed since 17 October 2019 against Lebanese banks by nebulous groups or organizations whose alleged purpose is to defend the depositors' rights.

In fact, these complaints merely consist of defamatory accusations devoid of any substance or content which are being abusively filed in close coordination with Judge Aoun for reasons known to all. Indeed, they enable Judge Aoun to trigger proceedings, use every means of pressure against the defendant banks and their representatives who do not share her political ideology, and thus impose her arbitrary decisions and constraining measures on them with a malevolent intention to impair their interests and business activities.

This is clearly the case in the procedure at hand as Judge Aoun pressed charges against SGBL and its Chairman General Manager on the grounds of money laundering without even bothering to provide the legal basis or rationale behind such decision.

Essentially, Judge Aoun ruled against SGBL and its Chairman General Manager as they refuse to give in to the means of intimidation used against them and are committed to complying with all applicable laws and regulations, notably those governing the banking secrecy. Let alone that judge Aoun is blatantly violating the most basic principles of law.

- 4- SGBL and its Chairman General Manager, Mr. Antoun Sehnaoui, will present their arguments and defence before the competent jurisdictions with the aim of canceling the vitiated procedures conducted by judge Aoun, notably for lack of impartiality, and dismissing all charges brought against them as they certainly did not commit any offences or crimes whatsoever.
- 5- As a further evidence of the various procedural infringements committed by Judge Aoun and her refusal to abide by the mandatory provisions of law, notably as a result of the petitions filed against her by the defendant banks, the Lebanese Prime Minister, Mr Najib Mikati, addressed on 22 February 2023 a letter (under number 292/O) to the Minister of Interior and Municipalities detailing such violations and requesting

the latter to take all necessary actions and measures in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations towards ensuring the enforcement of the Law, preventing its transgressing and guaranteeing the proper administration of justice. A copy of this letter was sent to the Ministry of Justice, the Highest Council of the Judiciary, the General Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation, the Judicial Inspection Authority and the General Directorate of the State Security.

Immediately upon receipt of the aforesaid letter, the Minister of Interior and Municipalities has dispatched an urgent circular also dated 22 February 2023 (under number 11) to the relevant police authorities, namely the General Directorate of the Interior Security Forces and the General Directorate of the General Security, urging them to abide by the contents of the Prime Minister's letter and thus refrain from providing any judicial assistance to Judge Ghada Aoun or abiding by any decision or order issued by the latter in all the legal cases that are subject to petitions filed against her, until a final ruling is made in respect thereof by the competent judicial authority.

- 6- Finally, on 28 February 2023, the General Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation addressed a letter to judge Ghada Aoun instructing her to cease all her investigations temporarily until all recourses filed against her are finally settled by the relevant judicial authorities, in accordance with the provisions of Article 13 of the Lebanese Code of Criminal Procedure.

SGBL and its Chairman General Manager, Mr. Antoun Sehnaoui, hereby reserve all rights and remedies in connection with the matter above.

**Société Générale de Banque au Liban S.A.L.**